



## 2012 Drought

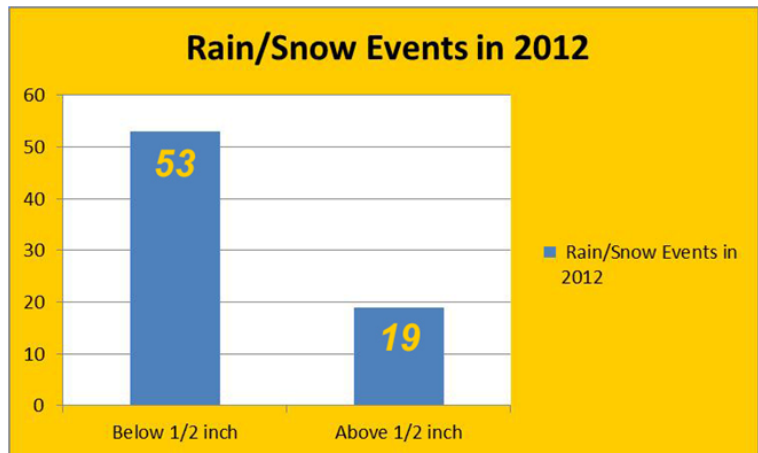
### When It Rains, It Doesn't Always Pour

By Scott Weir, Air Quality Coordinator

We all know that last year was drier than normal. The average precipitation for Brown County varies from about 33 to 36 inches per year. Our total precipitation for 2012, measured at the Kickapoo Environmental Office, was 29.24 inches. This is least 4 inches less than the average. Normally, this shortfall would have had only a slight impact on soil moisture and the water supply. But the drought was worse than the records indicate and this is why.

Key factors to determine how severe a drought include: how much rain falls and how often it falls. Light rains are less effective to crop production than moderately heavy rains, partly because  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch of rain or less will not usually wet the ground enough to supply soil moisture around the roots of the plants. Under very dry conditions, a rain of  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch has little effect on soil moisture in the root zone. Under these conditions, there's also virtually no runoff to fill streams, rivers and ponds.

The Environmental Office monitors rain and snow fall as well as the condition of our streams, river and ponds. The graph below, which was made using our data, shows that we received less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of moisture on 53 occasions. There were only 19 times in 2012 that yielded  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch or more of moisture.



In July when temperatures were in the 90s and 100s, we received only 0.69 inches of rain. This was during the worst part of the drought. Between August 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, we received a "drought-buster" which deposited 5.20 inches of rain. This three-day rain event gave us almost 1/5 of the moisture received during the entire year!

Yes, last year was dry, but the drought was worse than the yearly total indicates. The impact of the drought was enhanced by the fact that most of our rain came in small packages so much of the rain was absorbed in the top layers of the soil. This prevented moisture from reaching the roots of the local crops, and provided no excess moisture to fill our streams and ponds.

*Scott can be reached at (785) 486-2601 x2 or by e-mail at [scott.weir@ktik-nsn.gov](mailto:scott.weir@ktik-nsn.gov).*

## Upcoming KEO Events

- March 11—15: Community Cleanup
- March 13: Gardening Workshop, 5pm - Seniors Center
- April 9: Kickapoo Health Fair, 10am—2pm, Casino
- April 19th: KTIK Earth Day, 9am
- April 19th: 2nd Annual Household Hazardous Waste Roundup

**KICKAPOO  
ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE**

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***Working Together for a Better  
Community!***

**Do you have suggestions  
about how we can improve  
our newsletter? Let us know!**

## **Kickapoo's Got Talent!**

Opportunity to Win a \$45 VISA Card

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Do you draw, paint, sew, do graphic design or take pictures? Have you created an original art piece that you or your family are proud of? We're seeking submissions for original artwork to share with the community as the centerpiece of the 2013 Earth Day t-shirt design. One artist will be selected to showcase their work and receive a \$45 VISA card.

Environmental themed artwork is encouraged but not required.

If you have questions, call Crystal Wabnum at 785-486-2601 x8, or e-mail at [crystal.wabnum@ktik-nsn.gov](mailto:crystal.wabnum@ktik-nsn.gov).



**The deadline for submissions is Monday, March 18th —at noon. Late entries will not be considered.**

## **Dumpsites on the Rez: Online Public Records Coming Soon**

By Mike Kelley, Brownfield Coordinator

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One important goal of our Brownfield Program is protecting community members from sites that may be contaminated with chemicals and other dangerous materials. This goal is extremely hard to accomplish if the community has absolutely no idea which sites the Brownfield Program is concerned with. It is our hope that the creation of a public record will address this issue.



By Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, you can view documents and information about Brownfield sites at the Kickapoo Environmental Office website at:

**<http://ktik-nsn.gov/Brownfield.htm>**

The website will include the following information about each site: its name, location, details on known or suspected contamination, and the size of the site in acres. Although the program hasn't entered into the testing and cleanup phases yet, the web page will be updated with information regarding sampling, testing, and cleanup actions that we conduct at the sites.

If you know of an area where dumping has been taking place, but doesn't appear on our website, please let us know. Despite our best efforts to scout for dump sites, sometimes garbage is placed in an area we haven't discovered. We can't clean up a dump site that we aren't aware of. And without your expertise, we won't be able to identify and clean up sites that could be harmful to the land.

If you don't have internet access and want to view the documents, or you just want to chat, call or drop by the office and ask for Mike Kelley: (785) 486-2601 x 6.

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